



**U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection**  
*Office of Public Affairs*

# News Release

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## ***CBP Modifies Withhold Release Order on Tobacco Imports from Limbe Leaf Tobacco Company Ltd. in Malawi***

WASHINGTON — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has modified an existing [Withhold Release Order](#) (WRO) on imports of tobacco from Malawi. Effective July 31, 2020, tobacco imported from Limbe Leaf Tobacco Company Ltd. (LLTC) will be admissible at all U.S. ports of entry. CBP previously denied these tobacco imports entry into the United States based on reasonable suspicion that they were produced using [forced labor](#).

CBP modified the WRO based on a rigorous evaluation of LLTC's social compliance program and efforts to identify and minimize the risks of forced labor from its supply chain. These actions produced evidence that sufficiently supports LLTC's claims that tobacco from its farms is not produced and harvested using forced labor.

"This modification demonstrates the power of WROs to induce positive change in U.S. supply chains," said Brenda Smith, Executive Assistant Commissioner of CBP's Office of Trade. "CBP will prevent any products subject to a WRO from entering the United States until the manufacturer submits proof that there is no forced labor in its supply chain."

CBP issued a WRO on imports of tobacco from Malawi in [November 2019](#) due to concerns that the tobacco is produced using forced labor and child labor. The WRO continues to apply to imports of tobacco from Malawi by any company that has not demonstrated to CBP that there is no forced labor in its supply chain.

Federal statute [19 U.S.C. § 1307](#) prohibits the importation of merchandise mined, manufactured or produced, wholly or in part, by forced labor, including convict labor, forced child labor and indentured labor. When information reasonably but not conclusively indicates that merchandise within the purview of this provision is being imported, the Commissioner of CBP may issue a WRO.

CBP is committed to identifying and preventing products made by forced labor from entering the United States to maintain a level playing field for U.S. domestic industry. CBP receives allegations of forced labor from a variety of sources including the public. Any person or organization that has reason to believe merchandise produced with the use of forced labor is being, or likely to be, imported into the United States can report detailed allegations by contacting CBP through the [e-Allegations Online Trade Violation Reporting System](#) or by calling 1-800-BE-ALERT.

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*U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.*